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HUMAN HEARTS.

BY SADIE BEATTY.

The heights and depths of human hearts are hidden, A calm exterior may not speak of peace, A heart is a guest that comes to all in hidden, And mirth may cover pangs that will not cease.

Age, shrink aghast before the world's wide staring, They judge alone by what the eye can see, And if the outer man a smile is wearing, What is 't to them how deep the heartbreak be?

I on the ocean's placid waters sailing, Who thinks the moldering bones beneath to tread? And though in churchyards we may stand bewailing, We see the gleaming marble, not the dead.

No we approve, condemn by present seeming, And think the surface is the depth and height, While far below the hidden life is teeming With thoughts and feelings never brought to light.

Ah, secret wounds whose coming knows no going; Pride's folded hands conceal the festering darts; The world goes on and on, and I, too, knowing, The bitter heights and depths of human hearts.

THE

Bandits of the Prairie.

A TALE OF THE TEXAN FRONTIER.

BY T. J. CHAMBERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST MEETING.

It was a beautiful morning in October. Scene, a cattle ranch, or farm, in the western part of Texas.

The ranch had comfortable house in which Mr. Stanhope, the owner of the ranch, resided, was built by the edge of a belt of timber. A large and well-cultivated garden was enclosed in front of the house, in which grew numerous varieties of vegetables; and several carefully-tended beds of brilliant flowers showed that the inmates of the rough dwelling appreciated the beautiful as well as the useful.

The front door of the house stood open; and a young girl descended the steps and stood for a moment motionless on the grass-carpeted ground. She was evidently not afraid of the warm rays of the morning sun, for she held her bonnet in her hand, letting her dark curls wander at will over her shoulders. She was a wonderfully beautiful maiden, apparently about seventeen years of age—in the first bloom of lovely womanhood. Her figure was of the medium height, neither full nor slender, but exquisitely rounded and graceful. Her face was of the brunette type; large, lustrous, flashing black eyes, which she inherited from her Spanish mother; a broad, white brow, over which waved tresses of glossy, jet-black hair; smooth, oval cheeks, where the warm blood seemed ready to burst through the velvet skin; a small, bright, scarlet mouth, with a row of pearly teeth showing between the parted lips; a round, loving, dimpled chin, and a neck as fair and smooth as alabaster. Such was Louisa Stanhope, Mr. Stanhope's youngest daughter.

"Where are you going, Louisa?" called a soft, musical voice from the house.

A little frown dwelt on the girl's beautiful face for a moment.

"Only for a little stroll on the prairie, mother," she replied. "You need not be uneasy about me; there is nothing to be afraid of, and I will not go far."

"I wish you could be satisfied to stay in the house or the garden, my daughter," continued Mrs. Stanhope. "I consider it very imprudent for you to be roaming alone over the prairie."

"Why, what do you fear, mother?" asked Louisa, impatiently.

"I scarcely know. We have never been molested by the Indians so far, but still it is possible that some should be prowling around, and it is best to be cautious."

"Why, there is not an Indian within fifty miles of us. Good-bye, mother, I must take a run in the free air—but don't you worry about me."

No saying, the beautiful, willful girl donned her bonnet, and ran lightly out of the yard and upon the open, undulating prairie. She was a child of Nature, with a passionate love for everything wild and sublime; and her heart bounded with delight as she gazed over the boundless plain, dotted with occasional groves of timber, or with herds of grazing cattle.

"Ah, liberty, how sweet thou art!" she exclaimed. "Never will I part from these—never will I permit my soul to be bound in fetters of any kind."

She little thought what fetters were soon to be forged around her untamed, passionate spirit.

With glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, the young girl bounded across the prairie with the grace and almost with the speed of an antelope—sometimes pausing to examine a rare cluster of flowers that grew amid the grass at her feet. As the sun climbed higher in the sky, the heat grew intense, and Miss Stanhope sought the grateful shade of a grove of trees, where she seated herself upon a fallen branch to rest.

As Louisa gazed over the vast plain, she beheld in the distance a solitary horseman, riding in her direction. There was nothing remarkable in this—but the girl gazed at the lonely equestrian with deep interest.

"Who can it be?" she mused. "Perhaps it is Juan, my father's herdsman—but no—Juan never rides like that. I will soon know, for he is coming toward me."

The stranger's black steed was bounding over the plain with the speed of a deer.

"My lover shall ride like that—if I ever

have a lover," said the girl, with a musical laugh. "He sits upon his horse as proudly as if he were lord of all these prairies, and—oh, but there, he has disappeared, and I will think no more about him until he approaches closer."

The stranger had descended into a ravine, where ran a small stream, and was for the moment lost to sight.

Louisa Stanhope turned, and stooped to pluck a flower which grew at her feet. As she did so, she heard a slight rattling noise, like the flutter of a grasshopper's wings, and caught the glance of two strange, fiery, diamond-like eyes, fixed upon her face.

It was the deadly rattlesnake, which abounds in most parts of Texas.

Shivering with terror, yet unable to flee—held to her seat by the mysterious mesmerism of the reptile's eyes—the girl could only stare in horror at her dreadful enemy. She strove to break the subtle spell—to scream, to spring to her feet—but her tongue refused to perform its office, her limbs had lost their power; and slowly, and surely, her will became fascinated, until she no longer felt a desire to escape—she only wished to look into those small, glittering, devilish eyes. It was only a step between her and the serpent's mouth, and the reptile prepared to strike its deadly fangs into the maiden's flesh. His head was raised, and his red, forked tongue darted out and in with the rapidity of lightning. How long it would have dalled with its victim ere it struck the fatal blow, cannot be known; but a new actor appeared upon the scene, in the form of the solitary horseman. Comprehending the situation at a glance, the stranger quickly dismounted from his steed, grasped a revolver in his hand, and approaching close to the rattlesnake, he fired a shot which blew the reptile's head to atoms. This broke the spell that bound the girl's senses; but the shock to her sensitive nerves was too great. She uttered a slight scream, and then fell down upon the grass unconscious.

And then the stranger did what was undoubtedly very wrong, but what was also very natural, considering that he was a young man: he raised the maiden's form in his arms, bent his face close to hers, and pressed his lips upon her forehead, his beautiful, pallid lips. This novel procedure had the desired effect: Miss Stanhope soon recovered her senses, and opened her eyes to find a wonderfully handsome man's face touching her own. Her cheeks, which were as ripening cherries, and she struggled to free herself from the stranger's arms.

"Who are you, sir?" she cried, indignantly.

"The young man released her, with an amused smile.

"I will tell my father of your insolence, and he will have you punished, whoever you are," continued Louisa, almost ready to cry with anger and shame.

"You are scarcely just, young lady," said the stranger. "I find you powerless under the charm of a rattlesnake. I slay the reptile, and thus deliver you from a horrible death. You faint away, and to restore you to consciousness I take you in my arms and kiss you—a proceeding which does you no harm, and which affords me exquisite pleasure. Now, to pay me for all my trouble, you threaten to deliver me over to the tender mercies of an enraged parent. Have pity on me, fair maiden, I beseech you."

Louisa looked around, and saw the writhing body of the headless rattlesnake. Remembering the peril from which she had been delivered, she turned her great dark eyes, swimming in tears, to the stranger's laughing face.

"Oh, sir, forgive me," she said. "You have saved my life, and I thank you more than I can tell."

"Then you won't have me punished by your savage paternal relative?" asked the young man.

"Oh, sir, forget my ungrateful words; I did not know the services you had rendered me," replied the girl, bursting into tears. "Say you forgive me, or I will never forgive myself."

"There, there, little girl, don't cry—I will forgive you on one condition."

"What is it?" asked Louisa, drying her tears.

"You must forgive me for being so impudent as to hold you in my arms and kiss you—not exactly against your will, but without your knowledge," laughed the stranger.

"I forgive you, sir. I—I suppose the kisses—did no particular harm," replied Louisa, blushing like a peony.

"I hope not, I am sure. And since you are so gracious as to forgive me, I will promise not to repeat the offence—if I can help it," smiled the young gentleman, gazing with undisguised admiration at the lovely maiden, and receiving a shy glance in return.

While they were regarding each other, they will try to describe the young man's personal appearance.

Judging from appearance, his age was four or five-and-twenty. His form was tall, broad-shouldered and strongly built, but still light and graceful in movement. His face was fair, with a frank, open expression of countenance. His brown hair curled slowly around his shapely head, and a tawny mustache shaded his mouth. His eyes were gray, large, bright and piercing. His forehead was high and broad, and white as a woman's. Altogether, he was an eminently handsome man, and so thought Louisa Stanhope, as she surveyed him out of the corners of her big black eyes.

"Since we have met in such a romantic manner, my dear young lady, we should know each other's names," said the stranger.

"I will, therefore, introduce myself. My name is Walter Darrell. My home is in New Orleans, but I intend to spend the autumn here in Texas, at the house of an old friend."

"And I am Louisa Stanhope, youngest daughter of James Stanhope, the owner of this cattle ranch," said the young girl, trying to speak with dignity.

"The deuce!" exclaimed Mr. Darrell, adding, a moment later, "I beg your pardon, Miss Stanhope, but I am a good deal surprised. I am going to visit, so you and I are likely to become very well acquainted. My friend cannot be your father, however—he is still a young man."

"You must mean my brother George," he supposed. "I have heard him speak of forming the acquaintance of a young merchant in New Orleans—and I think he called his name Darrell."

"Your brother and I became firm friends, Miss Stanhope," said Darrell. "I had the good luck to save him from the toils of a set of gamblers, into whose hands he had unwarily fallen, and he was very grateful for my trifling services. We were constant companions while he remained in the city; and when he departed, he urged me strongly to pay a visit to his home in Texas. As I have always had a great fondness for hunting and fishing, I promised to accept my friend's invitation at the earliest opportunity; and, consequently, here I am."

"And I assure you that you will be welcome," said Louisa, warmly. "Our house is far from elegant, and you will find little

of the refinement you have been accustomed to in the city; but, at least, you shall not say that we lack hospitality."

"Or that my friend's sister lacks beauty," replied Darrell, gallantly. "Miss Louisa, if the rest of your family are as charming as yourself, I shall be delighted with my visit."

Miss Stanhope blushed deeply, but did not seem displeased by the young man's freedom of manner.

"Flattery is one of your accomplishments, I see," she said, laughing. "And doubtless your lady friends find it a very agreeable one; but it will be entirely thrown away on ignorant country-girls like myself."

"I never flatter," said Mr. Darrell, gravely. "And were I disposed to do so, I should not be able to flatter you."

"Worse and worse," laughed Louisa. "But come, Mr. Darrell, as you are going to my father's house I will be your guide, and conduct you thither."

"Ehony can easily carry us both, so you shall mount behind me," said Darrell, affectionately patting his steed's arched, glossy neck.

"The distance is short, and I prefer to walk," replied Louisa, looking suspiciously at her companion's restless, coal-black charger.

"Then I will walk also, and Ehony will follow as quietly as a lamb," said Mr. Darrell.

Accordingly the two walked side by side across the prairie, while the intelligent animal followed a few steps behind his master. Mr. Darrell was a fine talker, and on this occasion he exerted himself to please, with a fair measure of success. Miss Stanhope was charmed. She had never met a man so handsome and agreeable as this young stranger. She listened eagerly to his eloquent words, and when she ventured to raise her eyes to his face, they fell quickly before his admiring glance, and the blushes deepened on her cheeks. Young, enthusiastic and susceptible, she was fast losing her warm, passionate heart. In the morning she had bounded forth across the prairie as careless and heart-free as a child; a few hours later she returned with a strange, delicious sensation glowing in her bosom, and secret blushes dyeing her maiden cheeks. Never more could she know that freedom and light-heartedness which she had prized so highly.

CHAPTER II.

JUAN, THE HERDSMAN—A PLEASURE EXCURSION.

Mr. Darrell was cordially received by Mr. Stanhope and his family, and was soon made to feel himself at home. Mr. Stanhope was a hale, jovial, handsome man, fifty; his wife was an exceedingly beautiful lady, several years younger than her husband, and refused and delicate-looking. She possessed the prominent characteristics of the Spanish race—slender form, graceful carriage, and dark, passionate, handsome face, combined with the vivacity and freedom of manner of the American. Louisa resembled her mother very closely, except that her complexion was fairer; but Annie, the elder daughter, resembled her father. Her form was above the medium in size, her eyes blue, her hair a light brown, and while she was less beautiful than her sister, she was also more dignified in her bearing, and more intellectual in her pursuits. George, the only son, was a tall, handsome, dark-eyed fellow of three-and-twenty, rash and daring in disposition, and also frank, honorable and high-minded. His rashness and love of adventure often led him into trouble,

from which he generally managed to extricate himself by his dauntless courage.

There was another young man present, who was introduced to Mr. Darrell as Eugene Layton, the owner of a neighboring ranch. Darrell saw at once that he was Annie Stanhope's lover, and he felt that they would make a splendid match. As his first name indicated, Layton was of French descent, he was slender and wiry in form, with a rather thin and pale, but still very handsome face. He was highly intelligent, and Darrell found him to be an entertaining companion.

After the early dinner had been served, the family and guests adjourned to the long, vine-shaded porch, where the air was cool and refreshing. At her father's request, Miss Louisa brought forth her guitar, and George Stanhope produced a violin, on which he could not play, but on which Mr. Layton was a skilful performer; and the two musicians after tuning their instruments, proceeded to entertain the company with some choice music. Darrell was passionately fond of melody, and he bestowed upon the performers greater praise than they really deserved. While our friends were thus engaged, a man's figure came hastily from the stables, which were situated but a short distance from the house, and the stranger beckoned to Mr. Stanhope.

"Ha, Juan, what is it? what do you want?" asked Mr. Stanhope. "Come on and tell me here whatever you have to say."

Juan, the herdsman, came forward, and leaned against the railings of the porch, while his black, glittering eyes glanced from one to another of the group. He was a Mexican, quite young, and very handsome, although his face was swarthy as an Indian's, but there was a strange fire in his restless eyes, and a sinister expression about his mouth, which did not impress the beholder favorably. Mr. Stanhope entertained a very high opinion of him, however, as he was his chief herdsman, and he reposed in him unlimited confidence. Like the great man of Uta, Mr. Stanhope was rich in flocks and herds. His ranch covered thousands of acres of fertile pastures, on which great numbers of cattle were grazed the whole year through, under the care of experienced herdsman, mostly Mexicans, and of these Juan was the chief, as we have said. In deed, Mr. Stanhope paid but little attention to his herds, entrusting them entirely to Juan's supervision. A skilful physiognomist would have doubted the Mexican's honesty, but Mr. Stanhope was not an adept in reading people's characters by their faces, so he had never entertained any suspicions of unfair dealing on the part of his overseer.

"Is anything wrong, man? speak out, continued Mr. Stanhope, as Juan did not answer his first query.

"Yes, answered the Mexican, in good English. "Yesterday, a band of Indians—Comanches, I think—made a raid on a distant part of the ranch, and captured over a hundred head of cattle."

"The deuce!" exclaimed Mr. Stanhope. "I did not know that there were any Indians near; we have not been troubled by them any lately."

"This was a roving band of a dozen or so, prowling around to find something to steal. Gonzalez and two or three others pursued the rascals for a few miles, but they saw no hope of recovering the cattle, and so returned."

"I wish we could devise some means of punishing these red scoundrels," said Mr. Stanhope, angrily. "At this rate they will soon steal all the cattle I have."

"I hope you do not blame me for this,



LOUISA WATCHING THE APPROACH OF THE SOLITARY HORSEMAN.

Mr. Stanhope?" said the Mexican. "I could not help it; but now that I suspect danger, I will have the herds more strongly guarded."

"Blame you? Of course not, Juan. I know you to be a trustworthy fellow, and that you will guard my interests as closely as if they were your own."

"I will, indeed, for your interests are mine," replied Juan, bowing humbly to his employer, but his black, passionate eyes were fastened upon Louisa's face.

"Well, you may go now, Juan. I think it would be a good plan to engage two or three more men, to guard the most exposed herds, if you know where they can be found."

"I can find them, sir—good, fearless fellows."

"Very well, you may engage them at once. Good-day, Juan."

"Good-day, sir."

With another bow, attended with the grace of a polished gentleman, Juan turned and walked away toward the stables, carrying his lasso form proudly erect.

"That man is worth his weight in gold," said Mr. Stanhope.

"Papa, I don't like him," said Louisa, impulsively.

"And why not, little girl? What reason have you to dislike him?" smiled her father.

"I don't know—no good reason, perhaps—but I dislike him, for all that. He looks at me so earnestly, sometimes, and seeks to address me—sometimes I almost think that he loves me."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Stanhope, flushing with displeasure. "Juan has too much good sense to aspire to the hand of my daughter. He knows that you could never look favorably upon him."

"Well—I don't like him any way, papa," replied Louisa, decidedly.

"And, if you will permit me to express an opinion, I don't like him either," said Walter Darrell. "I consider myself a pretty good judge of physiognomy, and if over a man's face proclaimed him an accomplished villain, that fellow's done. I hope you will pardon me for speaking so plainly. Mr. Stanhope, but I do it for your own good—I wish to put you on your guard against your unprincipled herdsman."

"Why, Mr. Darrell, you are utterly mistaken," said Mr. Stanhope, in a surprised tone. "This man has been in my service for two years, and I have never had any reason to complain of him."

"That may be, but still I hold to my first opinion," persisted Darrell. "This Juan is a cautious rogue, and hides his true character under an agreeable and gentlemanly exterior."

"Well, well, perhaps you are right—but you must excuse me for not agreeing with you," replied Mr. Stanhope. "What is your opinion of my herdsman, Layton? Have you seen anything sinister in him?"

"I cannot say that I have," replied the young man; "but I must confess that I have sometimes entertained suspicions of his honesty."

"And so have I. I do not like the fellow's face," said Annie Stanhope.

"You are all against him, I see," laughed the old gentleman, "and you are all wrong. But I will keep an eye on his actions after this, and if I find that he is playing false with me I will discharge him."

"No doubt the fellow already has his pockets well filled," said Darrell. "Have the Indians ever stolen cattle from you before?"

"Why, yes, sometimes—but what has that to do with Juan's filling his pockets? Surely you don't think that my herdsman is in league with the Indians?"

"I should not express such an opinion without some proofs, but I really think that the Mexican knows more about the disappearance of your cattle than he cares to tell."

"You astound me," said Mr. Stanhope. "It cannot be possible that I have been the dupe of such a rascal."

"Do not believe my hastily formed opinions," continued Darrell. "I may be mistaken in the man's character, but at any rate it is best for you to be on your guard."

The conversation gradually drifted into other channels, and the afternoon passed rapidly and pleasantly away. Walter Darrell was more than pleased with his new friends; he was delighted, and congratulated himself frequently on his good luck in forming the acquaintance of such a charming family. I strongly suspect that Miss Louisa's black eyes and rosy cheeks influenced the young man a good deal, at least, when he went to bed that night he dreamed of seeing hosts of angels and, strange to say, the seraphs of his dreams were all gifted with black eyes and jolly grins—whereas angels are generally supposed to be azure-eyed and golden-haired.

The next morning being fine, the sky cloudless and the air cool enough to be invigorating, the young people concluded to ride over to Mr. Layton's ranch, that gentleman having tendered them an urgent invitation on taking his departure the previous evening. Accordingly the horses were got in readiness, and the party were soon galloping over the far-stretching prairie. Young Layton's ranch and dwelling were several miles distant from Mr. Stanhope's, and the sunshine was becoming uncomfortably warm by the time our friends reached the former. They were hospitably entertained, and remained until late in the afternoon, when the heat of the sun began to abate. Eugene Layton gladly agreed to accompany his visitors home, and rode beside Miss Stanhope. Walter Darrell monopolized Miss Louisa's atten-

tion, while George Stanhope was left to his own devices.

Hoping to come across a deer, or a herd of buffalo, on which to try his skill as a marksman, young Stanhope left his sisters and their cavaliers to enjoy each other's society, while he galloped over the prairie in search of adventure, as brave if not as foolish as the Knight of La Mancha, and was soon lost to the view of his friends.

Over an hour passed, and Stanhope did not reappear. Louise, who with Darrell rode a short distance behind the other couple, looked anxiously over the prairie. "I wish George would come back," she said. "It is getting late, and something may happen to him."

"Your brother is the best fellow in the world, but his cautionlessness is certainly not largely developed," replied Darrell. "However, there can be no great danger to him, for he is a good rider, and he is familiar with frontier life. Now, you'd better come on, riding at a furious rate, and galloping like a madman. What can he mean? Surely he would not go through such wild performances for sport?"

"No, no—something is the matter," said Louise.

Young Stanhope was indeed riding at a furious rate. He steered carelessly over the prairie, guided by luck and speed, and his rider was shouting at the top of his voice.

"Fly, for God's sake, run for your lives," he cried, as he drew rein. "What is the matter? What do you mean?"

called Darrell, astonished by such a command.

"Indians—Cannibals! Fly, or we shall all be captured," yelled Stanhope.

"You must be mistaken," said Darrell, gazing over the prairie.

"Do you think so? Look yonder then, do you see them? Fly, for Heaven's sake; there are nearly twenty of them—and our only chance for life is in flight, perhaps we can reach home before they overtake us."

"God help us, you are right," replied Darrell, as he perceived the savages coming over the brow of the knoll, a half mile distant. "Are you a good rider?" he asked, turning to Louise.

"Yes—never fear but I shall keep my seat," said the girl, fearlessly.

"Then let us ride like the wind," said Darrell, plunging his spurs into his horse's flanks.

"On, on," Layton, lead the way, and I will bring up the rear," cried Stanhope.

The horses on which our friends were mounted were young and spirited animals. They responded generously to voice and spur, and bounded over the plain with almost fearful rapidity. But the two girls were accomplished equestrians, accustomed to the saddle from childhood, and as the prairie was smooth and level as a floor, they experienced no difficulty in maintaining their seat, although riding at a break-neck rate. The Indians came on in hot pursuit, howling in a horrible manner.

"Faster! faster!" yelled George Stanhope. "By Heaven, the savages are gaining on us—we shall be overtaken!"

The savages were indeed gaining upon our friends. Their horses bounded over the plain as lightly as antelopes.

"We must not surely we can reach home ere they overtake us. And yet they are gaining rapidly, great Heaven, I would rather die at once, than to be captured by those human fiends!" panted Louise.

"Do not despair. We have a good start, but our horses seem to fly like the wind."

"On, on, on," again cried young Stanhope, who seemed almost maddened by excitement. "Darrell, make your horses do their best. I am going to give these devils a taste of cold lead."

Grasping his long, glittering rifle, Stanhope checked his horse, took a hasty aim at the foremost Indian, and fired. A dismal yell rang through the air, and the savage warrior tumbled from the back of his steed.

"There is one second shot in the world," said the young man, springing forward after his first companion. "Perhaps that will check their ardor a little. Hurrah! we are in sight of home! On, Darrell—on, Layton—we will soon be out of danger—we are saved—hurrah!"

For a few moments longer the fugitives fled onward with unaltered speed. But as they drew near to Mr. Stanhope's residence, they checked their panting steeds, and looked backward over the prairie, expecting to see the savages still in pursuit. But not a moving thing was to be seen; the vast plain lay smiling beneath the golden light of the setting sun, the solitude undisturbed by a single living form.

"What does that mean?" asked Darrell, turning to George Stanhope.

"Mean? Why, it means that the savages have given up the chase, and taken themselves back to the deserts from whence they came."

"But the prairie is almost level—they could not disappear entirely in so short a time."

"But you see they have," replied Stanhope, a little impatiently.

"They are gone, certainly, but may they not be concealed in some hollow or grove, waiting for the shades of night to fall, that they may attack your father's house?"

"Nonsense! that is not a Cannibal's way of fighting. Whatever they do, they do on horseback. I only wonder, however, that they did not follow us home. They might have captured all of us, and stolen our horses, if they had tried to do so. I suppose the fall of their leader discouraged them."

"Perhaps they have gone to attack my ranch," said Eugene Layton, anxiously.

"It is not likely," replied Stanhope, "and at any rate, your house is well guarded—much better than ours."

"I know nothing about Indian warfare," said Walter Darrell, "but my opinion is that the savages have concealed themselves somewhere, and that they intend to attack us in the night."

"Ah, Heaven, if they should, what could we do?" said Louise, shuddering.

"Don't be scared, said her brother, "I have no fear of anything of the kind, but it is best to be prepared, so we will ride on homeward, and fortify the house as well as we can."

"A good plan," assented Darrell and Layton, in a breath, and the party hurried home, commencing defensive preparations, which, owing to freedom from Indian hostilities, had been almost entirely neglected by Mr. Stanhope's household.

CHAPTER III.

WAR AND LOVE.

Mr. Stanhope was greatly alarmed when he learned the danger through which his children and his guests had passed, and was apprehensive of a night attack, but the night passed away without any cause for alarm; and when two or three days went by without any unusual occurrences, the family abandoned their fears.

"The thieves will not show themselves again soon, I fancy," said George Stanhope, who, with his sanguine temperament, always looks on the bright side of everything. "After this, they will confine themselves exclusively to stealing cattle, and if Juan and his men would shoot a few of them, they would quit that horrid area. Ha! here comes Juan now—and he walks lame. What ails you, man—been having a skirmish with the redskins?"

George Stanhope was standing with his father in the yard, a few steps distant from the house. Walter Darrell and Miss Louise, on either side of the porch, engaged in earnest and interesting conversation, judging from the blushes that mantled the maiden's lovely face. The Mexican approached and bowed respectfully to his employers, but his glance wandered unconsciously toward the pair on the porch, and there was a perceptible thrill on his dark brow.

"What ailed you, Juan?" again demanded George.

"We have had a fight with those cursed Indians," said the herdsman, gruffly.

"Heaven, how long ago?" eagerly asked young Stanhope.

"On Wednesday morning—and this is Friday," replied Juan.

"By Jove, I'll wager that it was the same band that was after us the evening before. They ran us nearly all the way from Layton's ranch, but shot the leader, and then they took themselves off in a hurry."

"Doubtless it was the same lot that attacked us," said Juan, with a peculiar smile.

"And did they stampede any more cattle?" asked Mr. Stanhope.

"Yes, the ranchers ran off forty or fifty head. We fought them as long as we could, but I got a wound in the leg which disabled me for a while, and the Indians succeeded in stealing a few of the cattle."

"Is your wound serious?" inquired Mr. Stanhope, much concerned.

"No, it is only a flesh wound, and will soon heal, but it caused me to fall from my horse, and I narrowly escaped being captured myself."

"What shall we do, Juan, to protect ourselves against these thieves?"

"I don't think they will bother us again," said the Mexican, confidently. "We killed at least a half dozen of them, and after this I think they will keep out of our way."

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Stanhope, doubtfully. "You don't think that they will venture to attack us here in the house, do you? We have been preparing for them."

"There is not the least danger of it," replied the Mexican, with a laugh that displayed his glittering teeth. "These Indians are not warriors, but dirty, sneaking horse and cattle thieves. They are the greatest cowards unhung, and I am determined that they shall capture no more of your cattle, if I have to lose my life in their defense."

"Thank you, Juan, I know that you will do all we can do, and I trust to you entirely."

"You are very kind," said Juan, "I must go now to look after the herds. I only came to tell you what had happened. Good morning."

The herdsman hurried away, trying hard to conceal the lump in his gut. Mr. Stanhope walked up to the porch, and addressed his guest with a complacent smile.

"What do you think of Juan, now?" he said.

"He appears to be sincere," replied Mr. Darrell.

"Appears to be? Why, the man was wounded in my service, and I verily believe that he would willingly lose his life in defense of my property."

"He may be all that you say, Mr. Stanhope, but still I do not like his countenance."

"He has such evil eyes, papa," said Louise.

"Nonsense, girl, nonsense," retorted the old gentleman, pettishly. "His eyes are very black, but of course he can't help that. I'll never believe anything against Juan until I am forced to."

A week passed away, but no more Indians on the herds were reported. Evidently the savages had been badly frightened by the reception they had met during their last expedition, and had concluded to let the ranchmen alone.

Walter Darrell was enjoying his holiday to the fullest extent. In the morning he and George Stanhope, accompanied sometimes by Eugene Layton, galloped across the prairie in search of or in pursuit of game, and in the delicious coolness of the October evening, he walked at Louise Stanhope's side through the luxuriant garden, or gazed enraptured upon her lovely face while she sang tender little songs to the tinkling of her sweet-voiced guitar. He was in love—deeply and passionately, he whose heart had never been touched by the charms of the belles of his gay native city, had fallen an easy victim to the smiles and blushes of this little country maiden, and he vowed that could he win her love he would be the happiest man in the world. True love is always blind, and the handsome, accomplished man of the world found himself blushing and trembling like a school boy when he was left alone with the object of his affections. Cupid is also reputed to be blind, and certainly Mr. Darrell's vision was obscured, or he could have seen that the lady looked upon him favorably, and returned his love. But the young man was too much in love to see this, and he felt sure that he was beloved, and was straightway transported into Elysium; the next he fancied that he perceived a look of coldness or dislike in his charmer's face, and he at once became elopely wretched. But nothing lasts forever, and the fates had willed that Mr. Darrell's surprise should soon come to an end.

Returning from a solitary ramble upon the prairie, Walter Darrell heard the sound of Miss Louise's guitar, coming from the vine-covered arbor in the garden, and knowing well that his darling was there alone, he hastened toward the spot, although the violent thumping of his heart threatened instant suffocation. When within a few steps of the arbor he paused, arrested by not wonderful love-sickness of the girl's face. The climbing vines were parted in places, and through the openings streamed the golden rays of the declining sun, reddening the maiden's cheeks, and brightening her dusky hair.

"She was singing a tender little love-song, and her voice, soft and musical as a bird's, thrilled her listener to the heart. He longed to rush forward and clasp the singer in his arms."

"How like a beautiful saint she looks!" he thought. "Oh, for a glance of love from those eyes, a kiss from those perfect lips! Can she ever care for me any? Ah, me, I fear not—she is too good, too beautiful, to love such a worthless mortal as I. And yet—"

Walter listened intently, for the maiden ceased her song, and unconsciously spoke her thoughts aloud.

"Does he love me? Can he love me?" she murmured, with a gentle sigh. "Oh, Walter, Walter, if you only knew how I love you!"

"Can she mean me?" thought Walter. "I hardly dare believe it, but I will know my fate to-night. I will declare my love, and win or lose all that makes life dear to me."

Flushing and pale by turns, the young man stood before the object of his devotion.

"Louise!"

"Mr. Darrell!" gasped Miss Stanhope, springing to her feet, with a face ruder than the Western sky.

"Don't call me Mr. Darrell," said the young man. "Call me Walter—let me hear your sweet lips pronounce my name as they did a moment ago."

"Ah, you overheard my foolish words," said Louise, covering her face with her hands and bursting into tears. But surely you will not take advantage of a name I cannot think that I meant what I said—I—"

"—and here the poor girl broke down utterly, and sinking back upon the rustic seat, wept without restraint.

"Oh, my darling! my darling!" cried Walter, falling upon his knees in true love-like style, and taking the girl's little trembling hand in his. "Louise, I was not so presumptuous as to think that you loved me, but your words emboldened me to speak what has filled my heart ever since I first saw you. Beautiful girl, I love you—I love you, or rather, I worship you, for love is too good a name for the passion that I feel for you. May I hope that you care for me a little—that you may learn to love me?"

Louise answered only by sobs, and the young man went into a still wilder rhapsody.

"Best and most beautiful of women," he cried, "give me a word of hope, or I shall die! Without your love I do not wish to live in this cheerless world. I do not ask you to love me as I do you, for I am unworthy of it—but only say that you do not despise me—that you like me a little—that you will try to love me, and I will be satisfied. Still silent! Oh, Heaven, you do not care for me—my love is hopeless, and I am the most miserable man upon the face of the earth!"

What woman could resist such an impassioned appeal, especially from the man whom she loved? Louise, hushed her sobs, and, raising her head, smiled down through her tears upon her lover's upturned face.

"Walter, do you really love me as you say?" she softly asked.

"A thousand times more than I can express," replied Darrell. "Words are powerless to convey an idea of the warmth and depth of my affection."

"Then I am happy," cried the girl, for however much you may love me, your passion cannot be stronger and deeper than that I feel for you."

My darling exclaimed Walter, throwing his arms around her yielding form.

Her arms flung around her lover's neck, her cheek touched his, their lips met in a long, lingering kiss. Their joy which dear friends feel when they meet like this in Heaven, cannot surpass the bliss experienced by the youthful lovers in that supremely happy moment.

Long the pair sat there, speaking but little, for their happiness was too great for words. The sun, like a ball of fire, sank out of sight in the crimson West, and the light of day faded into the tender twilight. The lovers were aroused to a sense of terrestrial things by hearing a loud, impatient voice in the direction of the house, calling "Walter—Walter Darrell! Where are you, man? Come here at once—I have something important to tell you."

That is George Stanhope, said Darrell, not without pleasure. "I suppose I must go and see what he wants, but if you will wait here, my darling, I will come back in a moment."

"I will wait—I always sit here during the twilight to watch the stars appear in the sky," said Louise.

"Henceforth your eyes are the only stars I shall watch. Good-by, my sweet, for a moment."

Darrell pressed a kiss on the girl's lips and hurried from the garden. Louise bent her head upon her hands, and became lost in thought.

Feeling a touch on her shoulder, and thinking her lover had returned, she sprang up with a joyful exclamation.

"Oh, Walter, you have come back!" she cried, throwing her arms around the man's neck.

But she instantly recoiled with a gasp of horror, for the swarthy face against which she had laid her cheek belonged not to her lover, but to her father's Mexican herdsman, Juan.

"No, you made a mistake, my pretty one," said Juan, with a low laugh, "but there is no harm done. You may put your arms around my neck as often as you please. I am perfectly willing."

"How came you here?" asked Louise, trembling with anger and shame.

"Why, I came to see you, my dear. I knew that this was your favorite retreat, and I came here to have an interview with you—a regular lovers' meeting in the twilight, you know."

"How dare you address me so insolently? Do you think that I would listen to words of love from your lips?"

"Ha, ha, how proud you are, my beauty," said Juan. "But a moment ago you seemed mighty pleased to listen to love-words from a fellow no better than I am."

"Ha! were you listening?" indignantly asked Louise.

"I was listening—and I must say that your fair face looks lovely in the twilight. I shall inform my father of your insolence, and he will discharge you from his service."

"Not so fast, my lady!" said Juan, with a terrible oath. "No doubt you would do all this if you had the power, but I mean to control you a little."

"You dare not touch me!" cried the girl, turning to leave the arbor.

Quick as thought, Juan threw one arm around her waist, while he pressed the other hand over her mouth.

"You dare not!" he hissed through his clenched teeth. We shall see. You are in my power now, pretty dear, and you shall never escape me."

Despite the poor girl's frantic struggles, the herdsman held her securely in his grasp, and bore her rapidly to the farthest part of the garden, where he leaped the fence with his barbed in his arms. In this operation he was obliged to take his hand from his captive's mouth, and Louise screamed for help at the top of her voice.

"Oh, Walter, Walter!" she shrieked, "help, help, help!"

"Ay, how!" growled the Mexican, "call to your gallant lover, come him; but it will do no good. You are mine—mine forever—I will take you where your friends can never find you."

And pressing his heavy hand rudely upon her captive's mouth, Juan, the herdsman, strode rapidly away across the prairie, and disappeared in the fast-increasing darkness.

(To be continued in our next.)

THE PROBLEM OF FATE.

Scene, a wide old country place. With vines and porches plenty. A youth with a sentimental face. And a maiden under treaty.

Enter, the passionate heart and glow of the sweet maiden's eyes. When searching early waken the fly chance are thrown together.

Rehearsal: outwitting every bloom. (Singing the "Eden Flower," which carries out a life's perfume Or within an hour.

MIRIAM KAHN.

DR. DORNE'S VIGIL.

BY SPHINX.

"I've no doubt of it—not the slightest!" said the boon companion of the physician sitting near his office, smoking quietly.

"How long have you known her, Woodward?" asked the doctor.

"About a fortnight."

Dr. Dorne peered out wreaths of smoke meditatively, then a singular smile stole over his face.

"A few periods to decide positively upon the question of her sanity. Out of that fortnight I suppose you've seen her once or twice?"

"Three times," said Woodward, lighting a pipe and slapping his soft kumuth hat on the side of his head. "Well, I'm off—good-night!"

After his departure, the sole occupant of the room indulged in a weary yawn, then commenced walking leisurely up and down the room with bent head, apparently deep in some retrospection. "Miss Forester—Miss Forester—let me see—ah! I have it," he exclaimed, nodding vigorously. "Two people were standing near the entrance, a man and a young girl; the persuasive voice of the latter fell in pleading, mournful accents upon his ear. Two minutes later as he was standing near a tree watching them, he heard one of two men in passing say—"

"There goes Forester now! he's sure game. They say he's drinking himself to death, and is borrowing immense sums of money, and losing frequently at rouge et noir."

While Dr. Dorne was recalling this scene, the memory of which was heightened by the wildness of the March night, he thought he heard above the voices of the elements a sharp ring of the bell. A note was soon handed him by the servant, and a strong current of air rushed through the room. He opened it under the flickering daylight and read—

"Dr. Dorne, will please come quickly, if possible. Dr. Elbert is out of town."

"E. FORESTER."

Putting a couple of cigars in his pocket, he found a carriage awaiting him, and stepping in, closed the door and leaned back, speculating upon the conversation with Woodward relative to the lonely life of his insanity now in circulation; he, however, had another clue to the mystery about her. After a ride of two miles, the man turned into the country seat known by the whole village as Fernhurst. He jumped down to open the gate and found it securely padlocked.

"Golly! the idea of keeping a professor of physics out in his dreary darning drizzle! I shall have to knock him down and carry him home!"

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The Haunted Cottage.

BY MARY AUGUSTA CLARKE.

"For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery, the spirit dark and drear,
And all, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place was haunted."

I was strongly reminded of these lines by Hood, as I lifted the latch of the garden gate, and stood for a moment surveying the house and grounds.

It was a one-story cottage, painted red, the small windows had no blinds, and some of the panes of glass were broken; while into the openings so formed were thrust old straw hats and newspapers. Where the hats came from I could not guess, but they always seemed to be at hand to do service where glass was not.

The house had not been painted for many years, and in places there was collected over the worn surface a kind of green mould or moss.

Two tall lilac-bushes grew beside the door and tapped their leafless branches against the windows in a very mournful way.

It was November, and the winds sighed through two lofty pine-trees that stood just inside the old tumbled-down fence, could not help wondering whether they should ever last their dreary voices to swell the sad and solemn music of the swaying boughs.

The grounds were large, and had once been laid out as a flower garden, but nothing had flourished; there was now and then a melancholy rose, standing almost overgrown by the long, dead grass, and the withered stalks of a few hollyhocks blowing about in the wind, and that was all.

And so this was my legacy, and this in future was to be my home. I confess to you freely that, had I not known that my purse contained barely a dollar or two, I should have made the best of my way back to the little town, which I had left about a mile and a half behind me, taken the cars, and returned to the city of Portland from whence I had come.

This was my legacy, and I don't if any one would have envied me the possession of it. It was left me by the last will and testament of my great aunt, Melinda Wheeler, a woman whom nobody could comprehend.

Her story was an enigma; when she was quite young she had married wealthily, but in a short time she was left a widow. Her period of mourning was short, and she became very gay, and lived in splendor and the excitement of fashionable society for awhile, and then, as if she had exhausted the pleasure of her native land, she went to travel with some gay friends in Europe. After a time she returned, but she did not; and they preserved a mysterious silence about her. All that any one could learn was that she was still abroad, and so fascinated with continental life that she would probably never return.

But after some years, and, to the surprise of those who remembered her, she did return; but, in the bowed and wasted woman that she now was, they could hardly recognize the dashing and splendid creature who had left them ten years before.

Her property seemed to have vanished as strangely as her youth and beauty. She did not remain in the city, but shrinking from old associations retired to this house, away in the northern part of New Hampshire, which she bought even then in a ruinous condition and which had grown more miserably during her occupancy. Here she had lived for many, many years, appearing to be so poor as hardly to be able to buy the food she needed to keep herself alive. She wandered around the house and grounds, with her bent form and strange, wild hollow eyes, muttering and moaning to herself sometimes, and seeming like a very ghost.

She scarcely ever went to town to purchase food. When she did she bought so sparingly that people hinted she had starved herself to death.

These were the stories that the gossip had told me at the nearest village, where I had spent the previous night. For myself, I had seen her but once, and only once.

I was an orphan, and did not know that I had a relative in the world. I was very poor, and supported myself by taking sewing from the shops. I received a mere pittance for it, and to do enough to feed and clothe myself I often had to work late into the night.

One evening, about a year before the time of which I am writing, I was sitting in my room sewing by lamplight. I was very busy, but all at once, although I had not heard the door open, I felt that some one was in the room observing me.

I looked up, just before me stood a tall woman clad in a dull gray dress and mantle and wearing a heavy veil. She was very slender, with bent shoulders, her hair was thin and gray. She was regarding me steadily from the depths of her large cavernous eyes, and I was frightened and could hardly suppress a scream.

"Is your name Julia Russell?" said she. I answered mechanically that it was.

She remained looking at me some moments longer in silence. Then she said, "I am your great aunt, Melinda Wheeler, and when I die I shall leave my property to you."

She turned and left the room. I was very much bewildered by her strange behavior, and as soon as I recovered my composure I went down stairs and inquired of my landlady if she had seen my strange visitor, if she knew who she was, or where she came from; but all that I could find out about her was that she had suddenly appeared in the house seeking me, that the servant showed her to the door of my room, and that she there desired to be left alone.

On the whole her conduct was so strange and inexplicable, that after thinking the matter over awhile, I concluded that the woman was crazy, and finally dismissed the subject from my mind entirely.

But to my surprise, a week or two before the time my story commences, I had received a legal communication saying that my great aunt, Melinda Wheeler, was dead, and that she had left all her property, consisting of a house and lot and a very small sum in money, to me.

It came very opportunely, for I had been sick, and consequently not able to work for some time. My landlady was a poor woman dependent on her business for a living, and I knew that my helplessness was a burden to the poor woman.

I was weary of battling with the world; though I was still young, I had learned to long for a quiet, peaceful home of my own, where I could feel secure from the storms and buffets of life, and to my tired eyes this legacy had appeared to offer a haven of rest; there at least would always be a shelter from the wind, and I could obtain sewing from the neighboring town, and so earn my living much more easily than in the city, where I had to pay rent, and where provisions were high.

Accordingly, by my request, the money was forwarded to me; and then I packed my trunk, settled with my landlady, and went to take possession of my legacy.

But as I stood surveying the house and grounds, and recalling the dreary story of my aunt's life, my courage failed me—I repeated the hasty step I had taken, and wished myself safely back in Portland.

I had hard work to reconcile myself to the idea of making this dreary place my home; but as there was now no alternative, I tried to reason away my forebodings, opened the gate and walked up the gravelled path, took the door-key from my pocket, turned it in the rusty lock, and entered the house.

Inside there was nothing pleasant or reassuring, the walls of the low, dark rooms were black with smoke; the furniture was of dull mahogany, and the bare, cold floors were painted the same color.

There were four rooms in all, the long, low-walled kitchen—the parlor, with its prim high-backed chairs and curtained windows—a man's bed-room, where her sombre dresses yet hung upon the wall, and her portrait stared down at me with its giant cheeks and hollow eyes.

I went through these apartments, feeling more and more depressed the longer I looked; then I climbed the narrow staircase into the room above; it had but one window, and half the glass in it was broken out, there was a bed and one or two old broken chairs, but the numerous dark corners were full of ghostly shadows and I hurried down again.

I might as well confess here, that I am naturally very timid, and for me the house and surroundings were particularly unpleasant.

I had ordered a load of wood and some groceries from the village, and I was very glad when the cart that brought them drove up.

The lad who came with the cart was the son of my hostess of the night before; he bustled around in a pleasant way, piling up my wood for me, building fires, and making the place seem far more cheerful with his lively chatter.

I set my table for supper, and with country hospitality, invited him to take tea with me; he accepted the invitation, and I began to feel much more courageous and cheerful; but he spoiled it all when he was going away, by saying—

"I hope you won't see any ghosts, miss. Folks do say they shouldn't wonder if Mrs. Wheeler's spirit walked, she was so kind of skerry, you know."

After he was gone, I hurried about washing the tea-things and setting the furniture to rights, making the dishes ready as much as I could, and singing very loud to keep my courage up; but after awhile my voice sounded discordant and dismal to me, my work was done, and no excuse for bustling round being left me, I seated myself by the fire; I did not sing any more, and at length I found myself counting the beating of my own heart, and being very careful not to break the dreary silence that reigned over all the place.

When the early twilight came on, I lighted the lamp and drawing the table up by the fire, sat down and tried to read, but the dim light, and the noise of the uncertain windows looked odd and comfortless; every few moments I would start up thinking I heard some one tapping upon the glass; then I would remember it was the lilac bushes, and would settle down again.

At length I became so nervous I could endure it no longer, I arose, took my light and went into the bed-room to go to bed.

There was a dressing-table with a looking-glass hanging over it; I put my light down upon the table, and stood before the glass combing my hair, musingly, and lighting a sigh; it startled the silence, and I fancied I heard it faintly echoed just behind me. I turned quickly around, half-expecting to see my aunt's hollow eyes regarding me, and I tried to persuade myself that it was only my imagination, but I started to watch the mirror with earnest startled eyes, and think with a thrill of horror how I should feel if I suddenly saw another face reflected in the glass; then I grew frightened at my own white, seared look, and blowing out the light with all speed, I jumped into bed, and tried to sleep.

I fell asleep in a short time, and was glad when I woke to find that it was morning and the sun was shining.

Through that day all went well; I kept myself busy putting things to rights, and doing what I could to make the place more inhabitable. It was quiet and lonely, but I found me so wearied out that I went to bed, and slept soundly until midnight; then I suddenly opened my eyes and was wide-awake in the moonlight, and staring at my aunt's picture.

How grim and ghastly it looked, and its cavernous eyes seemed fixed upon me; I could not turn away from them, there was a terrible fascination in their gaze; so I lay there returning the dreadful stare and longing for daylight to break the spell while the cold drops of perspiration stood upon my forehead.

Suddenly as I looked, I heard a loud, deep-drawn sigh. It seemed to come from the opposite side of the bed, and I sprang up and looked earnestly in that direction, but could see nothing. Then I buried my head beneath the bedclothes, and tried to shut out sight and sound, but I could still feel those piercing eyes gleaming on me; the dread was worse than the reality; so I lay there until morning light.

Then I arose, built a fire and prepared my breakfast. I was still affected by my last night's experience, but I could still feel those piercing eyes gleaming on me; the dread was worse than the reality; so I lay there until morning light.

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The lad who came with the cart was the son of my hostess of the night before; he bustled around in a pleasant way, piling up my wood for me, building fires, and making the place seem far more cheerful with his lively chatter.

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When the early twilight came on, I lighted the lamp and drawing the table up by the fire, sat down and tried to read, but the dim light, and the noise of the uncertain windows looked odd and comfortless; every few moments I would start up thinking I heard some one tapping upon the glass; then I would remember it was the lilac bushes, and would settle down again.

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I fell asleep in a short time, and was glad when I woke to find that it was morning and the sun was shining.

Through that day all went well; I kept myself busy putting things to rights, and doing what I could to make the place more inhabitable. It was quiet and lonely, but I found me so wearied out that I went to bed, and slept soundly until midnight; then I suddenly opened my eyes and was wide-awake in the moonlight, and staring at my aunt's picture.

How grim and ghastly it looked, and its cavernous eyes seemed fixed upon me; I could not turn away from them, there was a terrible fascination in their gaze; so I lay there returning the dreadful stare and longing for daylight to break the spell while the cold drops of perspiration stood upon my forehead.

Suddenly as I looked, I heard a loud, deep-drawn sigh. It seemed to come from the opposite side of the bed, and I sprang up and looked earnestly in that direction, but could see nothing. Then I buried my head beneath the bedclothes, and tried to shut out sight and sound, but I could still feel those piercing eyes gleaming on me; the dread was worse than the reality; so I lay there until morning light.

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AT THE GATE.

outside the open gate a spirit stood. "Come in," said the voice. "Ab, if I could! Five three within the light and glorious. But how all cold and darkness dwell with us." "Then," said the other, "come. The gate is wide." But he: "I wait two angels who must guide, I cannot come into this without them; repentance first, and Faith. The face that sees, I weep and call; they do not hear my voice; I never shall within the gate rejoice." "A heart saved!" the voice did answer him, "I reign over all the hosts of angels. Are not those angels also in my hand? If they come not to thee by my command. The darkness calls thee, I wait thee there: Are angels more than I? Come in, to me." Then in the dark and darkness and we. That spirit rose and through the gate did go. Trembling because no angel walked before, yet by the voice drawn onward onward. So came he weeping where the glory shone, and fell down crying, "Lord, I come alone." "And it was then I called," the voice replied: "Be welcome." Then Love rose, a mighty tide that swept all else away. Speech found no place, but silence rapt, gazed up into that face. Nor saw two angels from the radiance glide, And take their place forever at the side.

G. E. MERRITT.

THE MYSTERY OF TRENDLEDEEP MANOR.

BY PERCY R. ST. JOHN.

CHAPTER XIV.

MARRIED LIFE.

If any stranger, or even friend, could have said to Lucy Morton, now Treherne, that she was not happy with her young and thoughtful, but apparently open-hearted husband, she would have been very angry even at the suggestion. But it was undoubtedly a fact which she could not conceive from her own point of view.

Lucy was a keen and sharp observer, and after the first flush of that mysterious joy which appertains to the honeymoon was over, and she could look her husband a little more calmly in the face, she felt a great and sickening dread come over her.

Hubert Treherne Mordant was weighed down by some fatal mystery.

Now, right or wrong, the theory of the newly-married little woman was, that a man should have no secret from his wife, any more than a wife should have any from her husband.

It did not strike her that the very silence she kept upon this point was in itself a painful mystery.

One word on her part, one candid effort at explanation, and our narrative had never been written.

When the young man intimated that it was absolutely necessary to return to Trendledeep, and gave no reason, Lucy acquiesced without a murmur, though secretly much moved and much annoyed.

Hubert gave no explanation, entered into no details, and Lucy joining without difficulty in everything in the way of preparation, they were soon on their way home.

Now the child of mystery and sorrow, for such in the beginning had been Lucy Morton, began to show the strangest ideas to trouble her active little brain. Hubert was already weary of her, and was hurrying home to hide from the outward world his weariness and his disgust.

Lucy herself was not a woman to deal in half measures: what entered her head was apt to stay there, and the fatal theory once broached gained ground every day.

It is well to say, to husband and wives, as to brothers and sisters, love ye one another: but it is equally important to urge that where there is perfect love there should be perfect confidence; and that neither from any motive, however grave, should keep a secret from the other.

On their return to the manor-house, they were accompanied by Dicky Dart and Jenny, who, though thrown so much into one another's society, were not the best of friends. They, too, had their secrets and reticences.

One thing was certain, Hubert Treherne, now, by the royal permission, Mordant, never interfered with Lucy's prerogative as undoubted mistress of the house. He left the whole and sole direction of money matters to her; and though advising, and counselling, and influencing her, always behaved so as to let her see that she was the real mistress of the estate.

This of itself preyed upon the young wife's spirits. In marrying Hubert she gave up all claim to the pecuniary command, and only nominally retained it, in accordance with her grandmother's express wishes and commands.

The return to Trendledeep was not made without a grand manifestation on the part of the tenants, who gave the young married couple a warm reception, which was seconded by the servants.

Even Mrs. Church, now that the dame was dead, yielded the most implicit authority to Lucy; who in her unsophisticated eyes absorbed all, and succeeded to all, the old lady's potency and power. At all events, she was a true Mordant, and not, like Hubert, one who had taken the name by royal letters patent.

As soon as they were installed in the manor-house, Lucy became tolerably absorbed in the cares of an extensive household, which her grandmother had taught her personally to overlook; while Hubert from the first day began a series of absences, which, never explained or explained, became deep sources of regret and reproach to Lucy.

She never murmured, never repined, made no personal allusions to her source of grief; but she allowed all kinds of wild and strange suppositions to eat like a cancer to her very heart.

Hubert would rise early and scour the country half the day, returning at dinner-time both weary and thoughtful, though never alluding to the subject-matter of his thoughts and cogitations.

By degrees, however, this passed away, and the young husband began himself again, regained all his animal spirits, devoted himself to all the old amusements and usual style of life of a country gentleman, and to all appearance was happy and contented.

Lucy was not quite satisfied. There was, she felt, a drawback somewhere; but as she could not trace it out, and he seemed to wish it ignored and forgotten, she resolved to bow to destiny, and be as happy as possible. But when a woman believes that there is some secret reason why she should not be happy, it is very difficult for her to be so.

Lucy had everything that the world could point out as the means of enjoyment. She was rich, at the head of an extensive establishment; she had her town and her country house, a young and handsome husband. No one could be more kind, affectionate and generous than Hubert; there lay the very thing. He had married her to please his aunt, and was now trying with all his heart and soul to appear to have done so from love. So true is it that if genuine, naked cause of grief does not exist, we can make it for ourselves.

Men are less keen and sharp in matters

of the heart than women, and Hubert never appeared to entertain the slightest idea that Lucy was not happy. She had every reason to be so: all her neighbors either loved or envied her, while he was considered really and truly a happy man by his numerous visitors.

And they were very numerous, as at Trendledeep manor-house English hospitality was dispensed in the good old style, to the great satisfaction of the country.

Several guests were staying at the manor-house—country neighbors, who came for a day or two, but who were people not usually neglected or left alone. Lucy devoted herself heartily to the ladies, while Hubert did the same for the gentlemen.

One morning, with only a hasty assurance that he was called away, Hubert Mordant rode off, leaving the guests to the sole care of Lucy.

There had been some idea of a picnic of a journey to some more than ordinarily pleasant spot in the neighborhood—and Hubert was to be leader and guide; and now he was gone without telling him why or wherefore, and without fixing any date for his return.

No one save Lucy thought anything about the matter. In the better classes of society men are so often called away from home by business which they do not trouble themselves with, that his absence was considered quite a matter of course.

The expedition to the ruins was not, therefore, deferred; and even Lucy was as happy as she ever could be in the absence of her lord and master.

They returned early, dined, and spent the evening in the usual amusements. Lucy being evidently tired, the ladies beat an early retreat, leaving the gentlemen to follow or to go to the smoking-room just as they thought proper.

Lucy, having seen all her female friends to their chambers, retired to her own with Jenny. She very soon dispensed with her maid's services, and took up her old post of observation at the window, watching, with weary longing, like many another woman has done, for her husband's return.

He came home about midnight, dashed up to the door on horseback, stayed quite half an hour down stairs, and when he entered her chamber, was both surprised and vexed to see her up, and watching. He was evidently fatigued, and much put out.

"I wish, Lucy, you would not begin to contract a very bad habit—that of sitting up for me when I am away," he said in a slightly irritated tone. "When I found that all the ladies had retired, I took my supper—for I was hungry and tired—quite hoping to find you asleep when I came up."

"I have always waited you," replied Lucy, whose heart began to swell strangely in her bosom. "It seems so strange now to retire alone."

"Once for all, Lucy, you must have regard to your health and spirits than to cultivate these late hours in the country. If I am called away, as I may often be, unexpectedly, do not wait for me. It would only make me miserable, and do no good."

He offered no further explanation—not even the faintest hint of the cause of his absence.

Lucy's blood ran cold, and her heart seemed to stand still. She had waited up, with what sweet hope of confidence she only knew, to tell and to be told, and this was the end.

Hubert was not absent again for long. During that visit, and for some weeks, there were abrupt and unexplained departures, in which at times Dicky Dart partook; but about which to her no explanation was vouchsafed.

CHAPTER XV.

A DARK REVELATION.

The fixed idea that possessed the unfortunate Lucy was one of the most dangerous and delusive character. Her husband was either tired of her, or had never loved her; and so contrived these constant absences that the truth, which were they constantly together could not be concealed, might not be made known to her in a harsh or unpleasant manner.

True, when at home, whether before company or in the privacy of their chambers, Hubert was all that could be desired; but such is the terrible ingenuity with which women are gifted of love-torment themselves, that Lucy accepted all this as mere sacrifices at the altar of duty. Even as the mariner clings to the naked rock, from which he must ultimately be swept, so did she grasp what she thought was the shadow, after the substance had, she believed, departed.

And then again, for more than one reason, she strove and struggled against her own wild notions with an energy born of a sense of right and justice. If Hubert never had loved her, and had only married her to please her grandmother, or to protect her against evil, he was manifestly striving to conceal the amount of the sacrifice he was making, and therefore should not be blamed by her.

Still, in spite of all her good sense, despite the whisperings of her better judgment, there swept across her soul at times a double and cruel suspicion—one that sent the life-blood in icy floods back to her heart, and tore from her the one last link that bound her to life and happiness.

He had married her for her money! Poor Lucy! this was agony, indeed; and when she truly thought assisted her, what she suffered it is impossible to explain, for poor language, or pencil to paint.

Her agony was redoubled when the idea crossed her mind that these absences could only be explained in one way—in visits to the truly beloved.

If he had married her solely for her money, doubtless there was some one else in the background upon whom he poured the rich treasures of his affection.

Here it was that Lucy was to blame. She never spoke, but like the forlorn damsel who never told her love, allowed the cancer-worm of suspicion to eat into her very bosom.

Poor Hubert!—whose one thought was to spare her the slightest uneasiness, the faintest touch of pain—how fatally, how fearfully at last judged.

Under no circumstances, we repeat, should there be want of confidence between husband and wife. There is no secret, however terrible, which is not best told; and few men have regretted—even when the secret was a painful or even a shameful one—making their wives, as it were, their father confessor.

A wrong avowed and regretted is half expiated in a woman's eyes.

But Lucy never entered on the road of explanation. She was too certain of her own misery to have the faintest doubt, and she strove, with a courage that was foolish and even wicked, to combat the sorrow that had its origin in her own fertile brain.

Hubert, like most of his class, had a morning-room, where he gave audience to such persons as wanted to see him—grooms, keepers, the humble class of visitors, and such like—and where women scarcely ever ventured.

Hubert had been there, and always welcomed, even if Hubert were engaged; but

she had fallen out of the custom, and rarely went to the door.

Hubert since his wanderings was perhaps often closer than ever, and to spare in the world without calling it down unnecessarily on her innocent head. Heaven forgive me for my selfish reservations and deceptions.

"You can trust me, sir," replied the harsh but earnest voice of the strange groom.

Lucy moved away shocked and terrified. The words had fallen upon her like molten lead. The whole sentence was half forgotten; but the last—

"Heaven forgive me my selfish reservations and deceptions."

Hubert was a revelation—and the domestic world he had dragged from the mire made his confidence. It was more than a woman could bear, she thought. She must speak, she could endure this silent agony no longer. She would speak, she would have a positive explanation, and know the full measure of her misery at once.

Foolish, hesitating Lucy, why not have spoken, why not have appealed to Hubert, who sadly enough, it is true, would have told the terrible, the fearful truth?

But pride came to the relief of Lucy, and when Hubert joined her, a little vexed and half an hour down stairs, and when he entered her chamber, was both surprised and vexed to see her up, and watching. He was evidently fatigued, and much put out.

"I wish, Lucy, you would not begin to contract a very bad habit—that of sitting up for me when I am away," he said in a slightly irritated tone. "When I found that all the ladies had retired, I took my supper—for I was hungry and tired—quite hoping to find you asleep when I came up."

"I have always waited you," replied Lucy, whose heart began to swell strangely in her bosom. "It seems so strange now to retire alone."

"Once for all, Lucy, you must have regard to your health and spirits than to cultivate these late hours in the country. If I am called away, as I may often be, unexpectedly, do not wait for me. It would only make me miserable, and do no good."

He offered no further explanation—not even the faintest hint of the cause of his absence.

Lucy's blood ran cold, and her heart seemed to stand still. She had waited up, with what sweet hope of confidence she only knew, to tell and to be told, and this was the end.

Hubert was not absent again for long. During that visit, and for some weeks, there were abrupt and unexplained departures, in which at times Dicky Dart partook; but about which to her no explanation was vouchsafed.

CHAPTER XV.

A DARK REVELATION.

The fixed idea that possessed the unfortunate Lucy was one of the most dangerous and delusive character. Her husband was either tired of her, or had never loved her; and so contrived these constant absences that the truth, which were they constantly together could not be concealed, might not be made known to her in a harsh or unpleasant manner.

True, when at home, whether before company or in the privacy of their chambers, Hubert was all that could be desired; but such is the terrible ingenuity with which women are gifted of love-torment themselves, that Lucy accepted all this as mere sacrifices at the altar of duty. Even as the mariner clings to the naked rock, from which he must ultimately be swept, so did she grasp what she thought was the shadow, after the substance had, she believed, departed.

And then again, for more than one reason, she strove and struggled against her own wild notions with an energy born of a sense of right and justice. If Hubert never had loved her, and had only married her to please her grandmother, or to protect her against evil, he was manifestly striving to conceal the amount of the sacrifice he was making, and therefore should not be blamed by her.

Still, in spite of all her good sense, despite the whisperings of her better judgment, there swept across her soul at times a double and cruel suspicion—one that sent the life-blood in icy floods back to her heart, and tore from her the one last link that bound her to life and happiness.

He had married her for her money! Poor Lucy! this was agony, indeed; and when she truly thought assisted her, what she suffered it is impossible to explain, for poor language, or pencil to paint.

Her agony was redoubled when the idea crossed her mind that these absences could only be explained in one way—in visits to the truly beloved.

If he had married her solely for her money, doubtless there was some one else in the background upon whom he poured the rich treasures of his affection.

Here it was that Lucy was to blame. She never spoke, but like the forlorn damsel who never told her love, allowed the cancer-worm of suspicion to eat into her very bosom.

Poor Hubert!—whose one thought was to spare her the slightest uneasiness, the faintest touch of pain—how fatally, how fearfully at last judged.

Under no circumstances, we repeat, should there be want of confidence between husband and wife. There is no secret, however terrible, which is not best told; and few men have regretted—even when the secret was a painful or even a shameful one—making their wives, as it were, their father confessor.

A wrong avowed and regretted is half expiated in a woman's eyes.

But Lucy never entered on the road of explanation. She was too certain of her own misery to have the faintest doubt, and she strove, with a courage that was foolish and even wicked, to combat the sorrow that had its origin in her own fertile brain.

Hubert, like most of his class, had a morning-room, where he gave audience to such persons as wanted to see him—grooms, keepers, the humble class of visitors, and such like—and where women scarcely ever ventured.

Hubert had been there, and always welcomed, even if Hubert were engaged; but

she had fallen out of the custom, and rarely went to the door.

Hubert since his wanderings was perhaps often closer than ever, and to spare in the world without calling it down unnecessarily on her innocent head. Heaven forgive me for my selfish reservations and deceptions.

the wild conclusion that Hubert was about to subject her to some humiliating discovery—that she was to hear a confession of his having always loved another—in fact, an avowal that he had married her from purely interested motives.

Unfortunately, Lucy had prepared herself for some such discovery; but though she expected it, she knew full well that the truth would be terrible to bear.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE GARDEN.

Mrs. Church, going up into Lucy's room soon after her husband's departure, found her in tears.

"What can I do for you, Mrs. Mordant?" she asked. "You are not well?" There came a fresh burst of tears, and Lucy murmured brokenly something about Hubert not loving her, and having secrets from her.

"The master has secrets!" cried Mrs. Church, wildly. "So you have found that out, haven't you? All that's never been a Treherne married a Mordant but all came of it. Hubert is the best of all, but yet he has his secret."

"He will tell me to-morrow," said Lucy, harshly.

"He shall, or I will for him," continued the woman, in a stern, cold voice. "I told the maid how it would be, but she was obstinate, like them all."

Lucy listened with perfect awe and wonder. Her husband's secret had been known, then, to her grandmother, and was known to Mrs. Church. She now remembered the look of Jenny to Mr. Treherne, and her soul was filled with double anguish.

Then there came a solitary coming thought. Her grandmother knew his secret, and yet asked him to marry her. She reflected deeply.

"Mrs. Mordant loved me," said Lucy, at last, "and surely she could not have wished me ill. If she knew my husband's secret and told me not, it was because it was for the best I should not know it."

"Perhaps so," said Mrs. Church, retired, leaving Lucy alone to dwell upon what she had heard and resolved on. The night was fine, and she determined to wrap herself up warmly and stroll in the garden, where, at all events, she was free from interruption.

A thick shawl and a large hat were sufficient protection from the dew of night, and so, the moon shining brightly, and a calm, balmy air moving the rose-trees, Lucy went down.

A sheltered path, overgrown by trees, occupied the centre, and here Lucy, who had often strolled there with a manly arm around her, walked up and down, musing deeply on the past and the future.

The girl was at the same time positive and romantic. She believed in no love but the one first and unbroken truth which Hubert had sworn to her, and in which she had lately believed.

But she thought, to believe still that she was deceived, such was Lucy's theory; but none the less did the shadow fall upon her soul, as she decided in her own mind that Hubert had once loved another—still loved her—having wedded her to please his aunt, and partly, perhaps, from some sudden liking for herself.

However strong-minded a woman may be, however earnestly and seriously she may resolve to bear her cross, in the secret recesses of her own heart such a discovery and such a resolve are fraught with unnumbered misery.

At the moment when Lucy made up her mind that it was so, and she must bear it, the pang was none the less acute; and though she, perhaps, never loved her husband more, never did she feel more utter wretchedness.

"But I will be strong, I will be generous, and, perhaps, may learn to forget her from whom I have taken him, and really love me."

She stood still with folded arms, under the shade of a heavy-boughed tree, being concealed by a dark and gloomy shadow. At this instant she heard footsteps and voices.

"You can't see my lady to-night; you can't fit," said the earnest, almost menacing, voice of Dicky Dart. "Come along with me, and I'll hide you until morning."

"As you will, Master Dicky, but you'll pay me for this," said Lucy, who, though it was her husband's, could swear to him who stood within half-a-dozen yards of her, to all appearance under the influence of liquor.

Dicky Dart, with an indignant look, held him tightly by the arm, and led him away in the direction of the ivy-clad tower, or pretended ruin.

This was, then, the disgraceful and fatal secret. He drank, and in his cups was compelled to be absent from her—from all—and Dicky Dart, his devoted domestic, knew all about it.

In a dream, walking like a somnambulist, attracted as the bird is by the fatal serpent, Lucy Mordant followed in their track.

They entered the house, leaving the door open. Lucy crouched on the bench beside the ivy-clad tower, and distinctly saw Dicky Dart, while his companion had his back to her. Dick placed glasses and a bottle on the table, and then pulled out cards.

"I have no money," said the ghost, as it seemed to her, of the husband of her departed happiness. "The lady was cruel; why did she let me look at the wicked woman with the golden locks?"

"Just because she knew how to take care of it," said the other.

"But money is made for men. Never before in the history of the Mordants was everything left to the woman, except Lady Hester, and the girl Lucy with the great cruel eyes and the loud voice. I wanted to tell her before the lady, but the lady was cruel, and said I should have none of her money if I were not quiet, and I was quiet."

The groom smiled grimly.

"Who did she do then? Why leave all her money to the girl. But I will play, he said with a wild, half-intoxicated chuckle, 'for it must all be mine—shall be. Dick, when I am rich, when I have the money, and she is not master, we'll have life on the deep; there shall be horses and dogs and rare sport—Dick Dart!'"

And he drained a bumper of brandy. Lucy fled, horror-stricken and disgusted. Her noble husband, the refined and elegant Hubert, a grasping miser, who in his madness to clutch wealth, in his determination to obtain his aunt's inheritance, had taken to drink. It was horrible, too horrible, and could only be explained by one theory—too much love of gold had driven him mad.

It was a fearful discovery, but it explained much, the scene in the garden on her first arrival, her husband's sudden fits of absence of mind, his hurrying away when she came on, and now his coming home, and hiding under the care of Dicky Dart in the ruin, where he could give way to his furious passions undisturbed.

It was a fearful, a horrible discovery; but now that she knew all, what was to be done?

Lucy never knew how she regained her chamber, how she crept into bed, and, strangely enough, slept soundly—indeed, not until Mrs. Church brought her breakfast in bed.

"The master is not come home," she said, "but I dare say he won't be long. I have told them all you are not well."

Lucy looked at her with a strange and inquiring glance.

"Have over any of the Trehernes been mad?"

"Good heavens!" cried Mrs. Church, in a state of great alarm, "who has been chattering? My poor dear, you are feverish and ill."

"Yes—say so—let none come near me; I must sleep," said Lucy, and clutched her pillow wildly.

An hour later, a well-known step entered the room. Lucy by a powerful effort contrived to feign sleep. He hung over her, saying to Mrs. Church, who still remained—

"She has either discovered something or has been told something. Poor darling! 'Tis a terrible awakening for her. Heaven knows I would have spared her," said Hubert, earnestly and solemnly; "but it was not to be. She sleeps! Heaven shield my innocent lamb from too great suffering because of the curse of our race!"

"A curse indeed, drink and gold," said Mrs. Church, solemnly.

"Silence, on your life! Would you blast her ears with the fool sound? Would that the gold had never been if it led to cause misery. Would that it had been left to me," he added, with a sigh; "it had been better so."

And, stooping, he kissed Lucy and went away, nor did the poor suffering girl see any more of him at that time.

Lucy was stunned with horror. Every word her husband had uttered by her bed-side appeared to confirm her worst fears. Not in her present state did she pause to reason or reflect. Neither would she have any one for a confidant.

After luncheon the fever abated, and Lucy ordered her carriage. Mrs. Church resisted at first, but Lucy was calm and peremptory. A drive would do her good, she said, and the faithful attendant yielded.

Mrs. Mordant was absent some hours, and when she returned her guests had all departed. A kind of panic had taken possession of them.

Mrs. Mordant was ill, would see no one, drove out unperceived in a carriage. Doubtless it was some contagious disease.

Lucy smiled when she heard the news, and then went straight to her room.

"I shall be better for a night's rest," she said, later in the evening. "Do not let me be disturbed, even by my husband."

Mrs. Church thought that the rest might be useful, and as she wished it, left her mistress alone.

Lucy did not go to bed for a long time. She sat at a table weeping bitterly. Then she closed her door and windows, shut out every glimpse of day, and prepared for her vast and terrible enterprise.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE DARK SHADOWS.

It was about ten o'clock when Hubert Mordant entered his house. His mind was decidedly excited, but there was a beam of satisfaction in his expression, which seemed to indicate that he was the bearer of good news.

"Well," he cried, addressing Mrs. Church, "and how is Lucy?"

"I'll ask her," he knelt early, but she bade me not disturb her on any pretence, even if you returned. She wanted rest."

"When was this?"

"Last night."

"And she is not yet up. Come with me; Lucy is either ill, or something is the matter."

With a wildly-beating heart he advanced along the passage, and opened his wife's door.

It was strewn with letters, and the bed was empty.

"Where, where is she?" he cried, clutching the arm of the terrified house-keeper.

"What is this?" she gasped, showing a letter.

He tore it open with frenzied haste, looked at a few lines, and groaned.

"What can she mean? Mordant heaven! 'Gone! gone!' he exclaimed.

She would not, after she had apparently terminated all relations with me and my house, have kept that secret from you."

"The woman whom I married as Anne Marchmont, at the suggestion of your lordship, was an individual who never communicated to her left hand what her right hand had been guilty of, if she had a motive to keep silent about it," returned Lister, with an incisive emphasis. "I was her left hand—certainly her left hand, my lord."

"Does she live?" reiterated the marquess, with a slight elevation in his voice.

Again Lister glanced up at him under his eyebrows.

"As well as of me, my lord marquess, whether the President of the United States is at the present moment enjoying a cigar," he answered, cautiously. "Ask me, if you will, about a child—a beautiful, hapless innocent, and, therefore, most indignantly-treated child—and I will."

"Helen!" interrupted the marquess, peremptorily, and with an angry gesture of his hand. "Answer my questions only, and in no way wander from them. When you were living with your wife, Marchmont, after you had quitted Hastingsleigh Court, as you said, I believed, however, you must have exchanged and shared mutual confidences. The terrible events of that night—at the Stepping-Stones—could not have failed to be a fruitful subject of conversation between you. The woman Marchmont possesses an important secret in connection with it. I know she does, mark that. What is it?"

Lister rubbed his hands briskly, and seemed to be slipping boiling hot liquid. He shifted his eyes restlessly from the marquess to the beautiful face in the picture and back again, apparently debating in his mind what answer he should give.

"Answer me, man, without equivocation," urged the marquess, fiercely. "Answer me, and truthfully. You do not comprehend what a lie may cost you. Was Lady Hastingsleigh drowned at the Stepping-Stones on that night in all respects as ascribed to me?"

Lister drew himself up to an erect posture, and assuming a deportment which for him was dignified, he answered:

"My lord marquess, my life is as a piece of thread which has been steeped in sulphur, and to which a light has been applied. It is consuming slowly and surely. I, therefore, fear no threat, and cannot be moved by menaces. There is a young, fair girl—a lovely, graceful creature, in a perilous condition—your child, my lord."

"I will not hear a word of this," interrupted the marquess, passionately. "But you must, if you would have me speak," rejoined Lister, firmly. "You cannot force me to say what I know, but you may bribe me."

"Name your price. I will accede to your terms, however exorbitant," returned the marquess, eagerly.

"I do not ask for money," returned Lister, quickly, with a curious loftiness. "Though ready to beggary, I am not so at a wretch as to continue to help in keeping that sweet young child in a position so wretchedly and infamously beneath the one to which she is entitled. I say, my lord, your daughter."

"Again, man," interrupted the marquess, with extreme anger flashing from his eyes. "Lister threw up his hands violently, and continued, rapidly:

"Again, again, and again a thousand times again," he all but shouted. "She is a wronged innocent in extreme peril, with only the conscious rectitude of a pure mind to keep her from falling in the snare of one as well born as yourself, and as handsome as an Apollo. How poor a safeguard that is, my lord marquess, you cannot fail to remember."

"Repeat I will not hear you," he impatiently rejoined. "I acknowledge no child. If the thing you speak of became a soldier's drudge I should rejoice."

"No, no, no," rejoined Lister, quickly. "I know your nature, my lord, better. However, I have made a mental vow to do my best to see her restored to her rightful position. Her recognition by you, my lord, is my bribe—her replacement in the noble home from which she was so cruelly discarded will be my fee. Her happiness the only reward I shall care to claim. She is an innocent victim—your lordship will, at least, admit that."

The marquess turned from him impatiently, and paced the room with an irritated manner. Lister followed him with a shifting step.

"Understand me, I pressed, 'I do not ask you to bind yourself to a blind bargain, but when I have laid before you one or two facts which may serve to disabuse your mind of some false impressions respecting your hapless lady, I shall expect your promise, the promise of a man of honor and a gentleman—that you will give the poor child a case a fair hearing and your profound attention."

The marquess paused abruptly in his walk, and fastened his eyes inquiringly on him.

"Explain yourself, man," he exclaimed.

"My lord, I approach my subject with a full sense of its delicacy," answered Lister, in a subdued and respectful tone.

"Speak out and to the point," interrupted the marquess, impatiently. "You are only torturing me."

"Briefly, my lord," rejoined Lister, in quicker tones, and with more energy. "Your suspicions against the fidelity of my lady were raised by a letter. I shall be able to prove by and by to you, that in the interval between her marriage to you and the day on which she received that letter, she never saw the writer, nor for months previously, and certainly not since that horrible night."

The marquess waved his hand.

"Nothing," he observed, contemptuously. "Everything," urged Lister, rapidly. "To you, to her—to your child."

The marquess started.

"Oh, everything," continued Lister, rapidly, and with much earnestness. "That letter was a poisoned shaft, sent quivering into your camp through the wicked spite of a malignant woman, who had devoted herself to the avengement of her sister's wrongs, but my soul for it, my lady's good name is as free from actual guilt as unclouded snow. Consequently, her poor innocent—"

"You have not answered the question I put to you," interrupted the marquess, abruptly.

"Repeat it, my lord."

"Was Lady Hastingsleigh—really—drowned on that night at the Stepping-Stones?" he demanded, forcing out his words with an effort at composure which was only too palpable. "or was I made, between you and me, the victim of a juggler's trick, an artifice, to screen the dishonor of a guilty creature?"

"You were certainly deceived if you believed that the vicomtesse perished in the East's Pond," responded Lister, with a peculiar fluttering of the eyelids. "It is easy to be cheated when we wish to be."

The marquess did not affect to hear the last remark; but it was evident that he was deeply agitated by this confirmation of the suspicions he had so long cherished.

After a concealed struggle with his emotions, he submitted—

"Of course you are prepared to furnish me with evidence that the person of whom I have been speaking lives?"

"I did not risk my life to snatch you from a watery grave unless I was prepared to make you lordship see what a dreadful error you have committed, and how much you have made innocent persons suffer," answered Lister, with an expressive nod of the head.

"Innocent!" repeated the marquess, with a scornful curl of his lip. "At least, I may believe the evidence of my own eyes."

"By no means—not always," appended Lister, quickly. "Infernalism would be no art if you did. He convinced by proofs alone, and I will furnish you with unshakable evidence that the vicomtesse Hastingsleigh was an innocent and a married lady, and that her dear, sweet child, who has been rescued from actual death to be in danger of a moral death if we do not look sharp, has been the most indignantly wronged of all parties."

"I will give you the chance," exclaimed the marquess, pressing his temples with his hands. "If I could only be brought to believe—"

"You shall be brought to know and that is better than simple belief," rejoined Lister, shaking his hands with an air of satisfaction. "Only be pleased to order me a meal. I have fasted long, and though I feel like a spirit of vengeance, I have a faintness of stomach which does not agree with energy, perseverance and determination. Once satisfied in the abdominal regions I will ask you to accompany me in the task of hunting up one who knows all the truth, and from whom I can extract it by process, as you express the evidence in more than the one sense."

"You refer to your wife?"

"Follow me," ejaculated the marquess, with an air of feverish impatience. "I will not lose an hour in settling this horrible uncertainty—suspense has become insupportable to me."

He quitted the room, and Lister followed him with a shifting step.

While seated before a repast which the marquess had ordered for him, and then left him to partake of alone, Lister ate and mumbled and nodded his head significantly.

"I will be a tell-tale," he muttered, with his mouth full. "I will be a tell-tale, until I have seen that poor little queen of my heart and my memory moving queenlike in those proud halls. Ah! I wonder whether she remembers what I told her when I parted with her long years ago—whether she has ever repeated the name of Lister, and Lord hear me, I live in hope—Lord—Lord—"

He suddenly stopped, and his eyes grew to twice their size as an object near to the door caught his vision.

It was the form of a stately yet graceful lady, more like an apparition than a living, breathing creature. The face, though changed, was unquestionably the original of that portrait upon which he had gazed with humid eyes scarce an hour before.

He arose impulsively from his seat, trembling like an aspen. He drew his shaking hands together, and gasped, hoarsely and tremulously:

"My lady—my lady!"

She raised her hand quickly to impose silence, and closed the door noiselessly behind her. Then she glided hastily to him, bent her head, careworn face to his, and whispered, in a tone of agonized appeal, which thrilled every fibre of his easily excited nerves:

"My child—my darling! where is she?"

He gasped with open mouth, and could not articulate a word.

"I overheard all that passed in your lord's private chamber above," she pursued, in hurried, scarce audible, accents. "I did not stay here a second longer. All I ask of you is to tell me where I can find her—claim her. Oh, I have suffered so much, so deeply. In the name of charity, of mercy, of Heaven, give me the information, beg of you."

He tried to motion with parched lips, to force some sounds through his throat, but a spasmodic sound only issued thence.

"She was entrusted to Marchmont—you married her. You are not so unnatural, so relentless as she; you have not the motive," she urged, more passionately than ever. "I have pity on me. I am not mad now. I so yearn to press my darling to my heart, be merciful!"

She would have sunk in her frenzy of appeal upon her knees to him, but he arrested her and forced out:

"My lady—my lady—marquess."

"Hush!" she interrupted, excitedly. "No name—no title, not yet, not yet."

With the scared look of a hind who knew himself to be face to face with an apparition, with the trembling limbs of one who is suffering under an attack of *délirium tremens*, he thrust his hand into a pocket in the breast of his coat and pulled out a greasy, dilapidated pocket-book. He searched among some faded papers within it, and drew forth one which he offered to her.

"I was forced apart from the dear one when she was but an angel child," he said, with chattering teeth, as if he were shivering with cold. "And I did not see her again for years—a woman grown, a sylph-like creature. We met by chance, but I knew her at a glance, for how could I have passed unremembered a face I had worn in my heart, the only treasure worth preserving there? I saw her again in a time of fearful danger, and lost her as I thought forever, but no, an all-directing Providence brought me within a few paces of her as she was entering a house attended by a gentleman. I had no opportunity to speak to her, but I made inquiries, and found that the house she entered was the residence of General Cleveland Dyrart."

A scarcely-suppressed hoarse scream burst from the lady's lips.

"No, no," she exclaimed, in accents of horror. "Not there, not there."

"Yes—there," she responded, with a look of anxiety. "she will be safe there—she must be. The general has a splendid reputation."

The lady clasped her hands.

"He saved my life," she ejaculated, in extreme anguish. "persecute me not so sorely."

She read the address upon the paper with an almost frantic movement of her eyes.

"I must rescue her from him, or all is lost," she murmured, in an agonized whisper, and then she turned and glided from the room in the same spirit-like way as that in which she had entered it.

heard, and he will reunite them, for that it was the vicomtesse herself, living, breathing, I'll swear."

"Who?" cried a voice near to him, with a suddenness which made him leap.

He drew away his hat, and beheld the marquess before him, staring excitedly at him.

"My—a my wife," he gasped, hardly knowing what he said.

"The woman who this moment left you?" pursued the marquess, eagerly.

He nodded his head in reply, for he was unable to speak.

"She shall not escape me," exclaimed the marquess, between his teeth, "though she were as fleet as a reindeer," and he rushed from the room.

We are all miserable prisoners, and Heaven works its wonders in its own way. We were all bewildered, dazed, look, as he followed the direction the marquess had taken.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CLEVELAND DYRART MAKES A REVELATION.

The will-power—that is the spiritualistic term, we believe, for the strange influence which Cleveland Dyrart wielded over Ethelina in so extraordinary a manner—was not permitted by him to lose any of its force so long as he remained in her presence. He was but too conscious of the advantage it gave him, and he resolved mercifully to exercise it.

He had loved her mother when her age with a passion that absorbed every faculty and every consideration. There was nothing he would not have attempted to achieve for her, no sacrifice at which he would have hesitated to make her his. At that period of his life when, dazzled by her supreme loveliness, he threw himself in her path, he had only just obtained his captaincy by purchase, and it had almost exhausted his means. He was not, therefore, able openly to offer himself as a suitor for her hand, her father being, as we have seen, involved, and looking to her disposal to a wealthy husband as the means of relieving him from his pecuniary difficulties; but he lost no opportunity of endeavoring to win her affection by other means.

He was exceedingly handsome, of a somewhat delicate organization, and was endowed with a pair of dark eyes of marvellous color and brilliancy—those eyes of men which most women are instantly attracted by.

At that time he was unconscious of the position of the faculty of the will-power, and when he concentrated all his energies to induce the Ethelina of that day to reciprocate his passion, he thought he was only obeying the urgings of an uncontrollable and unmingled love.

The constant promptings of this love compelled him to follow her like her own shadow, to cross her path at every turn, and to suffer no chance of forcing her to see the effect her charms had had upon him up to the very moment when destiny, if it may be so stated, placed them together alone.

At that time he was unconscious of the position of the faculty of the will-power, and when he concentrated all his energies to induce the Ethelina of that day to reciprocate his passion, he thought he was only obeying the urgings of an uncontrollable and unmingled love.

This he did with a torrent of fervid eloquence, with such earnest, almost piteous pleading, that the young girl at whose feet he knelt, whose hands he clasped—nay, whose forehead he kissed—was transfixed with his own, found herself bewildered, dazed, powerless.

Love until that moment had really had no home in her heart; the attention, the flatteries, the homage of a host of admirers had pleased and occasionally flattered her natural vanity, but not one of the crowd had specially moved her, until she had suddenly beheld the dazzling eyes of Cleveland Dyrart fastened upon her. Then a strange, inexplicable thrill went through her frame, which, however, was even more like a sense of dread than it was a feeling of love, and she was the most entranced she had ever been.

She knew not the lure which had attracted her to him. She did not suspect—could not, indeed, have imagined—that possessing a superior power of will, he forced her to believe what he wished her to believe; that he was able to control her love, and that he was only her imagination which had been enthralled.

Overjoyed beyond description at the trembling, half-frightened admiration he had won from her confused brain and quivering lips, he did not permit her any pause, but he went on, and she followed him to the state of her heart, but followed her steps constantly, wrote to her in secret, and, alas for her, met her in secret, renewing his vows and his pleadings, giving her no time to think or reflect, to do, indeed, to believe that she loved him, and that an affection almost equaling in intensity his own.

He knew that his proposition for her hand to her father would be rejected with scorn, and he was plotting to contrive an elopement, although he had not even broached such a project to her, when his eyes were suddenly ordered to the south of Ireland.

Then came a hurried and passionate parting, and he saw her no more until he met her in the *Merrim's Dell*, as described in the opening chapter, still in secret, but the wife of another.

On that last occasion he had fallen by the bullet from the pistol of the Marquis of St. Leonards, then Viscount Hastingsleigh, but he had been only stunned by a graze on his temple, and when he came to his senses he saw the prone form of the viscount lying on the grass, with a flood of moonlight playing on it, and making it a ghastly object in that lonely, silent spot.

He fled from the spot, rejoined his regiment, then on the eve of embarkation for India, and left the kingdom in the full belief that he had avenged the loss of Ethelina by taking the life of her husband.

It was not for some years that he discovered that his bullet had not inflicted a fatal wound; but when he did it awakened all his slumbering memories, and aroused what he found to have been an inexhaustible store. He discovered, too, that his love for Ethelina had come back to him with a force which amazed and agonized him, and the conviction that, although he had heard she had perished on that fatal night, she was, in memory, at least, as dear to him as ever, gave only additional violence to the malignant animosity he bore the man who had robbed him of her.

With these feelings he arrived in England, bent upon satisfying his unquenched vengeance, but without having arranged any plan in his mind; and so, as destiny would, encountered the daughter of the woman he had so deeply loved, and who, as he believed, had cruelly deceived him.

In Ethelina the daughter he saw the Ethelina he had worshipped. In all respects she appeared identical with the woman when he first beheld her, and forgetting the lapse of time which had wrought many changes in her, he fell on meeting with her now as he had then. It did not occur to him that time would work changes in his Ethelina's face and form. He had remembered her as she was on parting from her, young and beautiful; and unconsciously he expected to find her

looks unchanged. He saw in the Ethelina who was now in his hands the exact counterpart of the object of his adoration, and it is easy to comprehend that at once he transferred to her the love which had been so long cherished, or even weakened by time or space.

His successful meeting with the woman who had so long had Ethelina under her care, and the lavish use of money, enabled him to extract from her the whole truth; and as he conducted Ethelina to the new home he had prepared for her, he knew that she was the only offspring of his first love—and of his merciless hate.

It appeared to him that it would be a re-assertment of revenge to flout this child before her father's eyes in high places, and in the circles and society in which he moved to say to the censorious world, the scandal-mongers, the babblers and chatters, who are never so happy as when blustering some one's reputation, "Here you behold the beautiful Ethelina, only daughter of the Marquis of St. Leonards, who died in the East's Pond, a poor, motherless child, for such reasons as he perhaps had conceded to give to the world, or I, Cleveland Dyrart, will supply for him."

It was equally a gratification of vengeance to be able to compel Ethelina to accompany him everywhere in public as his charge, his *protégée*, or whatever the marquess, in his baseless and unworthy suspicion, might to his own exceeding agony imagine.

This, at least, was a preliminary portion of his plan, and he proceeded without any delay to carry it out. It was no part of his design to raise any alarm respecting his object in the mind of Ethelina; and what ever his real purpose, he too well understood what was due to her purity of thought and actions to give her any apparent cause for disquiet.

He did not consent to communicate his intentions to her reputed parent, as at the outset of his negotiations with her he discovered that her proceedings in connection with Ethelina had been governed throughout, in the first place, by a spirit of revenge on account of her sister Lydia, who she looked upon as the victim of the viscountess, and in the second by an intense and hungry cupidity.

She was of use, however, in keeping Ethelina where she was now placed, and he used her for that purpose. His sister he had more difficulty with, for she was a disappointed woman, out of love with life, and looked upon Cleveland's proceedings as a kind of insanity, which she was forced to humor because dependent on him, and because she fancied she could gain certain ends of her own by not thwarting him at the present.

Ethelina—elevated to a position in the household to which she had been unaccustomed, treated with a cold formality by Miss Dyrart, with a new and sickening fawning by the woman who had claimed her until her arrival at the new abode as a daughter, but did not now with a strange kind of silent worship, which oppressed her painfully, by Cleveland Dyrart, and with the utmost respect by the servants—felt as if she were in a dream, accompanied by a total suspension of the mental faculties, a sort of imbecility, in which she consisted of everything she lacked the power to exert any energy or will of her own.

All that she seemed to feel was that she was in the toils of the mysterious man who had brought her hither, that she was helpless, and that events would take their course as if she were a puppet in a puppet show, or even to care what shape they took. She was so sick of everything, so weary of every life itself.

For her personal comforts there was a suite of apartments which would have gratified the luxurious tastes of a princess. A toilet room, with a dressing room, a bedroom, a sitting-room, a study, a library, and a billiard room, were at her disposal, and she was surrounded by the most refined and elegant of attendants.

Her only companion was the woman whom she had for so long been taught to look upon as her parent, feeling, as she used secretly to think with self-conviction, that she was the only one who could understand her, and who would be true to her in all her needs.

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ten across the eyes by a lightning flash. She half rose up, grasped the speaker's arm with a tight clutch, and looked eagerly and questioningly in her eyes.

Yet a moment's paroxysm of the hard orbs, and she released her hold and sank back to her seat with an irrepressible sigh, seeming to relapse again into her cold, apathetic state, save that there came a slight contraction of her brows, which did not relax.

Her companion watched her fortitively, and bit her lip with an air of vexation.

"You were always a strange child, Ethelina," she remarked, a little snappishly; "there was never much affection in your composition. Although you believed me to be your mamma, for you certainly knew no better, you never displayed any love for me. No, as if in opposition, you seemed to be much fonder of my filly, drunken husband. You remember him, I suppose?"

Ethelina did not answer, and the speaker went on:

"You ought to recollect him, I'm sure. The very last time you saw him he held you close to his drink-cracked face, and bade you recollect his ugly features, and to associate it with his name."

"Later," murmured Lydia, involuntarily.

"Oh, you remember that, do you?" she rejoined, with a sneer. "And I suppose, too, that he told you to live in hope."

Ethelina pressed her hands convulsively together.

"I have lived in hope—I am hopeless now," she ejaculated, wearily.

"Do not be a fool, Ethelina," returned the scornful woman, quickly. "Hopeless indeed. Why, look around you, and think what you are likely to be; recollect what you have left, and what you have been. Why, your hopes—that is, any such hopes as you could have formed—are about to be more than realized."

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BY MAX ADELER

— The last time we were in California we called upon Mrs. Ripley. She was the wife of a devoted clergyman who had gone to Fiji upon a missionary enterprise several months before. When we arrived we found Mrs. Ripley in mourning and in tears, and she informed us that she had received a day or two before a letter stating that her husband had been killed and eaten by his Sunday School class. We offered her what consolation we could under such distressing circumstances. We alluded to the fact that all men must die at any rate, and

And confess I am aware of their beauty."

"For half a second, Craig Leighton was surprised out of his self-possession, and actually started toward him. Of course she knew their beauty, but her manner was incomprehensible. Perhaps she divined his thoughts, for her smile deepened. That restored him to himself; and somewhat mortified that she should have turned him into silence, he replied coldly:

"You are candid, at least."

"And your tone adds, 'If not modest'?"

"That is your own construction."

"And certainly the right one. You at least are not modest."

"But if one should always express one's thoughts, what an uncomfortable world it would be," he said with a whimsical smile.



proved it, they spoke her real opinion on the subject. Their truth lay in what you regard as their insincerity. Had I said I was sorry, it would have been different; but in despair—he understood it as I intended he should—that I was no more in despair than they are mine, when you sign yourself 'yours truly,'

cases. An interesting article upon this subject lately appeared in the London *Milk Journal*, in which it is stated on the authority of Dr. Benjamin Clarke that in the East Indies warm milk is used to a great extent as a specific for diarrhoea. A pint of milk per hour will check the most violent diarrhoea, stomach-ache, insipid cholera, and dysentery. The milk should never be boiled, but only heated sufficiently to be agreeably warm, not too hot to drink. Milk which has been boiled is unfit for use. This writer gives several instances to show the value of this remedy. In one case a child was cured among which is the following. The writer says, "It has never failed in curing in six or twelve hours, and I have tried it, I should think, fifty times. I have also given it to a dying man who had been subject to dysentery eight months, latterly accompanied by continual diarrhoea; and it cured him, his milk being fresh. In his diarrhoea was gone, in three weeks he became a hale, fat man, and now nothing that may hereafter occur will ever shake his faith in hot milk." A writer also communicates to the *Medical Times and Gazette* a statement of the value of milk in twenty-four hours of typhoid fever, in the absence of which the patient dies. The parent. It checks diarrhoea, and nourishes and cools the body. People suffering from disease, require food quite as much as those in health, and much more so in certain diseases where there is rapid waste of the system. Frequently all ordinary nourishment is rejected, and the patient's stomach, and even loathed by the patient; but nature, ever beneficent, has furnished a food that in all diseases is beneficial—in some directly curative. Such a food is milk. The writer in the journal last quoted, Dr. Alexander Yale, after giving particular remarks upon several points above mentioned, says, "The action of milk in diarrhoea, its nourishing properties, and its action in cooling the body, says, 'We believe that milk nourishes in fever, promotes sleep, wards off delirium, soothes the intestines, and in fine, is the *sine qua non* in typhoid fever.' We have also lately seen a case of diarrhoea in a child, and learn that it is now recommended by the medical faculty in all cases of this often very distressing children's disease. Give all the milk the patient will take, even during the period of greatest fever; it keeps up the strength of the patient, acts as upon the stomach, and is every day a good thing in this disease. Parents, remember it, and do not fear to give it if your dear ones are afflicted with this disease."

oz. of isinglass, previously soaked; add this to the cream, strain it, pour it into a mould, and put it in a cold place or on ice to set.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others of send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid.

Mrs. E. H. (Monterey, O.) asks: "Please inform me if the story called *Monks Christi*, printed many years ago in the Post, is issued in book form. If so what is its cost, and where can I get it?" It has not been published.